A Short Guide to Running a

Dads Playgroup



A dads playgroup is a space where fathers and father figures can come together with their children to connect, play and support one another.

These playgroups create opportunities for dads to build confidence in their parenting role, strengthen relationships with their children and form social connections with other dads and families. They also help reduce isolation and promote positive wellbeing for children and fathers.

Dads playgroups can be open to all dads, including stepdads, grandfathers, carers and male role models. Some groups may also be tailored to specific communities or interests.

Playgroup Space

- Create a welcoming, relaxed and inclusive environment for dads and children.
- Include comfortable seating for adults alongside safe, engaging play areas for children.
- Display posters, books or images that reflect diverse fatherhood experiences.
- Ensure the space feels informal and nonjudgemental. Encourage conversation and connection
- Consider practical needs such as pram access, change facilities and space for active play.

Partnerships and Promotion

- Connect with local organisations that support fathers and families.
- Promote the playgroup through workplaces, community centres, childcare services and social media.
- Use inclusive language and images that represent diverse dads.
- Partner with services such as parenting programs, health services or men's support groups.
- Encourage word-of-mouth promotion. Dads inviting other dads can be especially effective

Toys, Resources and Activities

- Provide a mix of active and quiet play options (for example building toys, outdoor games, books).
- Include activities that encourage interaction between dads and children.
- Offer simple, low-pressure activities such as crafts, ball games or storytelling.
- Encourage dads to share their skills, hobbies and interests.
- Support different parenting styles and comfort levels with play—participation can look different for everyone.
- Include opportunities for group activities as well as free play.

A Short Guide to Running a

Dads Playgroup



An Important Note

Every dad's experience is different, and there is no one "right" way to parent.

Take time to build trust and create a space where dads and father figures feel comfortable being themselves. Some may be new to parenting, new to the community or unsure about joining group settings.

Be mindful that some fathers may be experiencing stress, mental health challenges or other life changes.

Encourage participation without pressure and invite dads to contribute ideas and shape the group. A successful dads playgroup is built on respect, shared experiences and genuine connection.

More Information

Raising Children Network's Fathers Resource

Reliable, research-backed advice for fathers.

Rad Dads

An organisation offering evidence-based fatherhood information and activities.

The Fathering Project

Information from an organisation that educates, connects and mobilises fathers and families to create brighter futures for children.

Dadfit

Making dadding a team sport

For more advice and resources, register your playgroup!